Between Ecclesiology and Ontology: A Response to Chris Allen on British Food banks

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Abstract

The sociologist and theologian Chris Allen develops aspects of both Liberation and Postliberal theologies to launch a critique of the two dominant contemporary Christian responses to British food insecurity: food charity and food justice campaigning. Allen maps an alternative approach: a land activist Church that draws on its own historical counter-cultural practices and takes an oppositional stance to the contemporary state and market nexus. Drawing on the work of the Italian philosopher and political theorist Roberto Esposito, this essay argues that Allen's goals could be more fully realised by investigating with greater nuance Christian ontology, ecclesiology and the role of the state. Turning again to Allen's sources in this essay, the variety and potential of foodbank volunteering along with the legitimacy of food justice campaigns are critically reintegrated into a more radical project, a project which includes but is not limited to the sphere of the ecclesia.

Keywords

Charity, Foodbanks, Roberto Esposito, Liberation Theology, Postliberal Theology

Introduction

With a view to responding theologically to the upsurge in British food bank use, this paper seeks to outline the parameters of an ecclesiology which both includes food charities and food justice campaigners as participants *and* breaks with the logic of British neoliberal capitalism. In order to achieve this aim, the paper sets the social scientist and theologian Chris Allen, so far the most theologically articulate interrogator of British food aid, in dialogue with his theological sources and with the Italian philosopher and political theorist Roberto Esposito. The key issues here are: one, whether Allen is right in contending that both food justice campaigns and food charity concede too much to the norms of contemporary British capitalism in their everyday workings. And, two, whether Allen's commitment to orthodox Christian beliefs like God the creator and Christ the Son of God are compatible with his refusal to imagine a place for the state. As Allen himself notes, alongside the question of food security there are the related issues of food sustainability and dietary health, issues that are particularly

pressing following the British public's decision to vote against staying as members of the European Union.[1] Currently, the United Kingdom has a food footprint twice the size of its agricultural area. Yet, there is evidence to suggest that the UK could become a net food producer and achieve a sustainable, safe, and equitable British food system for all; it is my hope that the British church and food aid industry can find its voice, now long overdue, as an advocate and agitator for said arrangement.[2]

This nexus of food, agricultural, and economic problems has led to a range of activists, civil society groups and academics call for a British Food Act. An Act which includes provisions for sustained governmental attempts to think and act on food issues in a coherent and integrated manner.[3] Research suggests that discussions around British food sustainability need to be situated in and informed by a 'multi-criteria framework' if a 'modern, low impact, health orientated UK food system' is to be achieved.[4] The current system is orientated towards the single aim of market liberalisation with concomitant promotion of consumer choice.[5] According to Timothy Lang, professor of food policy at the University of London, a 'sufficient, sustainable, safe and equitable' food system can be realised in the UK but only if the overlapping problems of 'diet related ill health, ecosystem damage, economic dependency, and social reliance on migrant and relatively low-waged labour' are confronted.[6] Lang calls for a 'new statutory framework for UK food' and with his co-authors in the paper *A Food Brexit: time to get real* makes a number of demands of HM government which are necessary prerequisites for the realisation of this ambition.

Food banks are directly linked to food sustainability (primarily in the form of recycling and redistribution) and also sit at the juncture of diverse jurisdictions: economic and/or labour

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[1] Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs, *Health and Harmony: the future for food, farming and the environment in a Green Brexit* (APS Group, 2018), available at https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/the-future-for-food-farming-and-the-environment, accessed 01/06/2018.

[2] George Monbiot, available at http://www.monbiot.com/2018/01/17/eating-the-earth/, accessed 30/05/2018. A key issue which I unfortunately do not have space to engage with here is vegetarianism and veganism, as shown in the excellent S. Fairlie's 'Can Britain Feed Itself', http://www.thelandmagazine.org.uk/articles/can-britain-feed-itself, accessed 30/05/2018. Kenneth Mellanby, *Can Britain Feed Itself?* (London: Merlin Press Ltd, 1975).

[3] See Dee Butterly, Ian Fitzpatrick, *A People's Food Policy*, available at https://www.peoplesfoodpolicy.org/, accessed, 31/05/2018.

[4] Tim Lang, Erik Millstone, Terry Marsden, *A Food Brexit: Time to get Real*, available at https://www.sussex.ac.uk/webteam/gateway/file.php?name=foodbrexitreport-langmillstonemarsden-july2017pdf.pdf&site=25, accessed 30/05/2018.

[5] Elizabeth Dowler, 'Food Banks and Food Justice in "Austerity Britain"' in Riches, Graham, Silvasti, Tiina, eds., *First World Hunger Revisited: Food Charity or the Right to Food* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), pp. 160 – 175. Jennifer Clapp, 'The Trade-ification of the food Sustainability Agenda', *The Journal of Peasant Studies*, Vol. 44, No. 2, pp. 336 – 363.

[6] Lang *et al*, *Food Brexit.*

marginality, governmentality and welfare policy, social isolation, health inequalities, and the ongoing involvement of religious people in the public sphere(s).[7] Chris Allen has advanced the theological interrogation of the British food bank movement by putting forward the case that Christian involvement with both food banks – what he refers to as 'food charity' – and secular food justice campaigns are insufficient theologically and ineffective practically. Allen's proposal is that Christians concerned with food sustainability and food insecurity should prioritise faithfulness to the radical heritage of Christian practices and (re)turn the church to radical land activism which 'speaks the gospel of Jesus rather than capitalism.'[8] He argues that fidelity to the forms of knowing and practice inherent within the Christian tradition means a radical schism from the capitalist economy and its servile state apparatus.

Within the context of a world in which current levels of soil deterioration leave the earth with 60 years of reliable harvests, I argue that Allen's position is insufficiently radical.[9] The majority of this paper is dedicated to understanding the theological reasons for Allen's position and amending it where necessary. In particularly, this paper draws on the work of the Esposito to develop Allen's turn towards ecclesiology. Allen argues that food aid (along with its theological defences) and neoliberalism overlap, this paper responds by pointing towards the internal diversity of British food banks. Allen pairs theological faithfulness and ecclesiological purity with the blanket refusal of secular forms of knowing and acting, I respond by pointing to moments in the texts of Gustavo Gutiérrez, John Milbank and Angel Méndez-Montoya in which the secular is both refused *and* reclaimed. My own position is that a commitment to the church includes and cannot be separated from the participation in and transformation of extra-ecclesial institutions such as the economic market and state apparatus and that this is more theologically coherent, more ecclesiologically nuanced, more representative of the ambiguity of participating in food bank facilitated encounters, and more generous and tactically prudent (as it holds out the possibility of a coalition of partners from both food justice and food charity backgrounds working together) than the position currently offered by Allen. The relationship between ontology and ecclesiology offered in this paper is more radical than Allen's because it includes the vigorous reform of economy, state and church.

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[7] The most comprehensive and up to date studies on British food banking are Kayleigh Garthwaite, *Hunger Pains: Life inside Foodbank Britain* (Bristol: Polity Press, 2016) and Rachel Loopstra, Doireann Lalor, *Financial Insecurity, Food Insecurity, and Disability: The profile of people receiving emergency food assistance from the Trussell Trust Foodbank network in Britain*, available at https://www.trusselltrust.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2017/07/OU_Report_final_01_08_online2.pdf, accessed 30/05/2018.

[8] Chris Allen, 'Food Poverty and Christianity in Britain: A Theological Re-assessment', *Political Theology*, Vol. 17, No. 4 (2016), pp. 361-377, at. p. 373.

[9] George Monbiot, available at https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2015/mar/25/treating-soil-like-dirt-fatal-mistake-human-life, accessed 30/05/2018.

Allen's Position

Before critiquing Allen's position I will give a brief overview of food banks and food insecurity in the UK. What are commonly referred to as food banks – 'places where those in need can receive a parcel of food sufficient for their household' – includes a diverse range of institutions and norms.[10] Food banks 'operate a variety of structures and management systems; some linked to other activities such as cooking clubs, free meal provision, or community cafes; some are part of a formal networked franchise system run by the Trussell Trust.'[11] FareShare are another prominent British food aid charity that 'distribute "surplus" or "waste" food from the food and drink industry', while other more informal and independent charities take food from local volunteers and businesses and redistribute it with the help of volunteers,[12] volunteers who often supplement emergency parcels with 'signpost advice and further help out of extreme emergency need.'[13] Recent research by the Independent Food Aid Network suggests that there are now 2,000 food banks operating in the United Kingdom, 1,373 distribution points run by the Trussell Trust, along with 650 independent food bank groups.[14]

The Trussell Trust was begun in 1997 by Carol and Paddy Henderson. In 2000, following work with orphans in Bulgaria, Paddy started Salisbury Food Bank in his garden shed and garage.[15] 19 years later, the Trussell Trust gave out 1,109,309 food parcels in 2015/16, up from 346,992 in 2012-13, and 25, 899 in 2008-2009, and estimate they saw 554,000 individual users in 2015. Trussell Trust distributed 10,570 tonnes of food in 2015/16.[16] In 2016/17 the numbers rose again: to 1,182,953 three day emergency food parcels.[17] Foodshare redistributed 9,070 tonnes of food in 2015/16, an estimated 18.3 million meals, and feed 772,000 people a week in 2018 (a 60% increase on the previous year).[18] The food poverty or food insecurity that food banks meet are complex terms to define and quantify. Graham Riches and Tina Silvasti say that food insecurity is the 'limited or uncertain availability of nutritionally

[10] Riches, Silvasti, eds., *First World Hunger Revisited*, p. 170.
[11]Ibid., p. 170.
[12] Riches, Silvasti, eds., *First World Hunger Revisited*, p. 170.
[13] Ibid., p. 171.
[14] https://www.theguardian.com/society/2017/may/29/report-reveals-scale-of-food-bank-use-in-the-uk-ifan, accessed 19/07/2017.
[15] https://www.trusselltrust.org/about/our-story, accessed 26/07/2017.
[16] https://www.trusselltrust.org/2016/04/15/foodbank-use-remains-record-high, accessed 16/06/2016.
[17] https://www.theguardian.com/society/2017/apr/25/food-banks-report-record-demand-amid-universal-credit-chaos, accessed 16/06/2016.
[18] http://www.fareshare.org.uk/charities-serve-up-18-million-meals-diverted-from-waste, accessed 16/06/2016. https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2018/may/28/huge-rise-in-food-redistribution-to-people-in-need-across-uk, accessed 30/05/2018.

adequate and safe foods or limited or uncertain ability to acquire acceptable foods in socially acceptable ways.'[19] Garthwaite, Collins, and Bambra say that there are approximately 500,000 people living with food insecurity and 'an estimated 4.7 million people in the UK now living in food poverty' if one defines food poverty as spending ten per cent or more of household income on food.[20] In 2013 there was a 19% increase in people hospitalised in England and Wales for malnutrition.[21]

In his article 'Food Poverty and Christianity in Britain: A Theological Re-assessment', Allen discerns two distinct responses to food poverty in the UK. The first of these is the 'historically dominant Christian social tradition in Britain, which emphasizes charitable giving.'[22] The second is a 'social justice approach', which has been 'derived from human rights discourse.'[23] For Allen, both of these approaches are problematic. The food charity model, when viewed from the perspective of the charitable recipient, appears demeaning, embarrassing and degrading and fails to meet the standards of the 'preferential option for the poor' as outlined in Contextual and Liberation Theologies.[24] The food justice model is equally myopic, Allen continues, for it marginalises ethical, political and theological questions about food sourcing and ecological justice to gainsay the right to food consumption. On the social justice approach to food poverty, Allen says that 'Christian leaders and organisations have called for minimum incomes in the form of minimum wages, living wages, and a just social welfare system' secured through the legal and legislative apparatus of the state and the judiciary.[25] However, drawing on the work of John Milbank, Allen says that the social justice approach sacrifices too much: it is the church using secular terms and appealing to a secular institution, the state, which jettisons the church from its own mooring in an alternative order. Allen argues that in the call for a human right to food we see 'a church speaking in the hegemonic language of capitalism and its privileged economic elites, i.e. the language of the "agribusiness" complex that reduces people to consumer of its food products.'[26]

Behind both of these positions, for Allen, lies an illegitimate theological confidence: the unilateral identification of the Kingdom of God with a social program or set of practices. Allen says that charity and social justice 'encourage misrecognition of current Christian

[19] Riches, Silvasti, eds., *First World Hunger Revisited*, p. 6.
[20] K. A. Garthwaite, P.J. Collins, C. Bambra, 'Food for thought: An ethnographic study of negotiating ill health and food insecurity in a UK foodbank', *Social Science and Medicine*, Vol. 132, pp. 38 -44, at. p. 38.
[21] Ibid., p. 38.
[22] Allen, 'Food Poverty and Christianity', *Political Theology*, p. 361.
[23] Ibid., p. 361.
[24] Ibid., p. 366.
[25] Ibid., p. 369.
[26] Ibid., p. 369.

responses to food poverty as either objectively identical (food banks are a "calling" that "shows Jesus' love") or logically compatible (social justice as a desirable goal of social policy) with God's will. In other words, they can too easily be assumed to be matter-of-fact truths that are unproblematic.'[27] For Allen, the lesson that needs to be taken from recent gains in the fields of Contextual and Liberation theologies is that all thought and practice is marked by its place of origin and the experience of shame and guilt food bank users feel in engaging the services cuts against the preferential option for the poor.[28] Thus, food charity, Allen continues, emerges from 'a privileged theology that reflects the privileged nature of the church voices that promote it', while contemporary social justice approaches emerging from and concerned with the territory of the United Kingdom '[render] the exploitation of the earth and its inhabitants in food producing countries analytically invisible'.[29] The alternative to these two approaches is to 'produce theologies that arise from a situation of poverty reflected on in the light of the Christian story' and Allen goes on to say that this line of enquiry implies 'radical alternatives' to the currently dominant models.[30]

Along with his dependence on gains in Liberation Theology, Allen's use of the work of John Milbank is revealing. It helps him construct and execute a hinge in his work: the transition from doctrinal or ontological commitment (to God the creator) to ecclesiological practice (the church breaking itself off from the practices of the world). In a passage at the end of the second edition of Milbank's *Theology and Social Theory*, Milbank says that in order 'to think a Christian theology, and at the same time to think theology as a social science' one needs to explore a number of interrelated tasks.[31] First, Milbank says, one needs to put forward an articulation of history from the perspective disclosed in the 'counter-history' of the church, what he calls an 'ecclesiology'; second, one must undertake an exploration of the 'counter-ethics' of the church's actions, an investigation of the distinctiveness of the church's praxis; third, one must carry out an articulation of 'the framework of reference implicit in Christian story and action… the articulation of a "counter-ontology"'.[32] Like Milbank, Allen links the history of an institution (the church) with particular principled actions (ones exhibiting the 'fellowship' or 'membership' he advocates[33]) and a theoretical framework (ontology,

[27] Ibid., p. 364.
[28] Ibid., p. 361-377.
[29] Allen, 'Food Poverty and Christianity', *Political Theology*, p. 361, 2.
[30] Ibid., p. 366.
[31] John Milbank, *Theology and Social Theory: Beyond Secular Reason* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2006), p. 383.
[32] Ibid., p. 383.
[33] Allen, 'Food Poverty and Christianity', *Political Theology*, p. 371.

'giftedness'); he builds his argument between an ecclesiology and an ontology. I will come to what kind of politics emerges from these authors, but for now it is enough to show that doctrine and ecclesiology are linked in Milbank and Allen's theological method.[34]

Allen writes that the natural world is 'God's universal gift of creation' and that there is a 'living unity that Jesus restores between human beings and the gift of creation' which allows Christians to speak of '"communism of being" which stresses our existence as relational and dependent upon God'.[35] For Allen, the groups that best exhibit these theological commitments (and their concomitant dispositions: hospitality and gratitude) are the Catholic Worker Movement, the seventeenth-century Diggers and the third century anchorites.[36] For Allen the groups who have failed to put these aforementioned theological precepts into practice are contemporary food bank organisers and food justice campaigners. Each has failed the test of a robust theology set by John Milbank: they have 'sought to borrow from elsewhere a fundamental account of society or history, and then to see what theological insights will cohere with it', or so Allen claims.[37] Allen says that the Christian church has 'become subservient to the political discourse of capitalism which it now relies upon to supply it with understandings of social problems such as food poverty', a problem that stems from it 'treating [capitalism] as an autonomous secular realm legitimately governed by the state'.[38] If the world is God's, there can be no such fully autonomous realm.

Allen is right to draw attention to the intermingling of state and capitalism in British politics. Despite being a signatory of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights which in Article 11 asserts 'the right of everyone to an adequate standard of living for himself and his family, including adequate food, clothing, and housing, and to the continuous improvement of living conditions' the British state has for the last 50 years refused to recognise and respond to the hunger of its people.[39] The 'Food Banks and Food Poverty'

[34] Unfortunately Allen does not engage the body of literature which sharply distinguishes between the theological methods employed by Liberation Theology and Radical Orthodox theologians. See: Milbank, *Theology and Social Theory*, p. 206 – 256. Peter Scott, '"Global Capitalism" V. "End of Socialism": *Crux theological*? Engaging Liberation Theology and Theological Postliberalism', *Political Theology*, No. 4 (2001), pp. 36 – 54. D.M. Bell, *Liberation Theology after the End of History* (London: Routledge, 2001). Ivan Petrella, *The Future of Liberation Theology* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2004).
[35] Allen, 'Food Poverty and Christianity', *Political Theology*, p. 370, 371.
[36] Ibid., p. 371.
[37] Milbank, *Theology and Social Theory*, p. 382. Allen, 'Food Poverty and Christianity', *Political Theology,* p. 366 – 369.
[38] Allen, 'Food Poverty and Christianity', *Political Theology,* p. 369.
[39] Article 11, http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CESCR.aspx. A full list of signatories can be found here: https://treaties.un.org/Pages/ViewDetails.aspx?src=IND&mtdsg_no=IV-3&chapter=4&clang=_en, accessed 30/05/2018.

briefing supplied to members of parliament in support of their duties and preparation for a parliamentary debate on the issue in 2014 for example notes that 'no government since the 1960s has undertaken any official empirical study of benefit adequacy, but independent estimates of "Minimum Income Standards" suggest that current out-of-work benefit rates for people of working age are significantly lower than the amounts necessary for a minimum acceptable standard of living.'[40] In other words, not only does the British government knowingly pay starvation level benefits to its subjects, it has also recently capped benefits at 1% (meaning a real term cut because of inflation and the linking of benefit payments to the Consumer Price Index (CPI) rather than the faster rising Retail Price Index (RPI))[41] and it has consistently underpaid a range of its benefits, to the tune of £10 billion in unpaid or unclaimed benefits in 2013/2014.[42] The role of the law courts in enforcing the government's public space protection orders and criminal behaviour orders also factors into contemporary British governmental antipathy to the hungry, as a British Judge recently stated: 'I will be sending a man to prison for asking for food when he was hungry' when he sentenced a man to four months in prison for begging.[43]

It is little surprise then that Allen places his hopes on the actions of the church. The 'radical alternatives' that Allen defends are listed as: '(1) a public church that speaks the gospel of Jesus rather than capitalism; (2) an agronomic church that is also a land activist; and (3) a church that is a site of hospitality rather than charity.'[44] He advances the church as the inculcator of 'new food spaces outside of capitalism', urban and guerrilla gardening, and the practice of 'morally reclaiming and physically occupying such lands [that were acquired by forcibly evicting poor families from their homes] in order to create new collective food growing spaces'.[45] Given the history of Christian land activism 'it is astonishing', Allen concludes, 'that

[40] Emma Downing, Steven Kennedy, Mike Fell, 'Food Banks and Food Poverty' available at http://researchbriefings.parliament.uk/ResearchBriefing/Summary/SN06657, accessed 28/05/2018, p. 25.
[41] Riches, Silvasti, eds., *First World Hunger Revisited*, p. 165.
[42] Garthwaite, *Hunger Pains*, p. 87.
[43] https://www.theguardian.com/society/2018/may/20/homeless-people-fined-imprisoned-pspo-england-wales?CMP=Share_iOSApp_Other, accessed 28/05/2018.
https://www.gloucestershirelive.co.uk/news/gloucester-news/man-breached-order-stop-him-242853, accessed 28/05/2018.
[44] Allen, 'Food Poverty and Christianity', *Political Theology*, p. 373. Arguably hospitality is just as complicated a notion as charity. For Jacques Derrida, hospitality is itself contradictory as being able to share a place, be hospitable, requires one to possess a place to share and, thus also potentially withhold it. See: Jacques Derrida, *Of Hospitality* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000).
[45] Allen, 'Food Poverty and Christianity', *Political Theology*, p. 373, 374. See Sarah Glynn, eds., *Where the Other Half Live: Lower Income Housing in a Neoliberal World* (London: Pluto, 2009) and Chris Allen, 'Review: Where the Other Half Lives: Lower Income Housing in a Neoliberal World', *Critical Social Policy*, Vol. 31, No. 3, pp. 487 – 490 for examples of the forced seizure of the poor's housing by state and market agencies.

these radical traditions have not been mentioned by any senior church figure in the current debate about food banks and food poverty.'[46]

First, how useful is Allen's division of 'food charity' and 'food justice'? My local food bank, Country Durham Foodbank, runs an allotment alongside its food bank work, and already distributes this produce among its service users: it is simultaneously land activist and charity dispenser, in Allen's terms. Niall Cooper, one of the lead campaigners of the End Hunger UK campaign and co-author of the report *Walking the Breadline*, is also involved in food charity and the transition of food banks to 'food pantrys'; the line between food charity and food justice is not as clear cut as Allen's work suggests as many activists and volunteers transition between the two.[47] A more sophisticated placement of food banks into the current context needs to be put forward, one which accounts for their internal diversity and, potentially, their diverse place in relation to non-civil society groups like the state apparatus and parts of the capitalist economy. I will return to this question shortly.

Second, what about Allen's transition from theological commitments to the character and identity of the church and its' relationship to 'the world'? Allen draws throughout his essay on the work of the Roman Catholic theologian Angel Méndez-Montoya. From Méndez-Montoya, Allen sources the theological idea of a 'communism of being' which he juxtaposes, as Méndez-Montoya does, with contemporary food consumerism and politics premised on individuality.[48] Allen says that writers like Méndez-Montoya, and Norman Wirzba, are helpful because 'they achieve [an] epistemic break with political economy' by asserting that 'there is no autonomous space outside of God in which Christians can operate, i.e. as food consumers.'[49] For Allen, the dependence of creation on the Creator God and the reception of the gift of the world in gratitude is hidden by acquisitive consumerism. The ubiquity of contemporary capitalist practices results in many having 'barely any direct involvement with the divine source of our lives' in the area of food and eating.[50] The 'epistemic break' from this current nexus of

[46] Allen, 'Food Poverty and Christianity', *Political Theology*, p. 375.
[47] https://www.theguardian.com/society/2017/mar/22/pantry-tackles-chronic-food-insecurity, accessed 30/05/2018. Niall Cooper, Sarah Dumpleton, *Walking the Breadline: The scandal of food poverty in 21st Century Britain* (2013), available at https://policy-practice.oxfam.org.uk/publications/walking-the-breadline-the-scandal-of-food-poverty-in-21st-century-britain-292978, accessed 01/06/2018.
[48] Allen, 'Food Poverty and Christianity', *Political Theology*, p. 362.
[49] Ibid., p, 370, 371. See Angel F. Méndez-Montoya, *The Theology of Food: Eating and the Eucharist* (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), and Norman Wirzba, *Food and Faith, A Theology of Eating* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011).
[50] Allen, 'Food Poverty and Christianity', *Political Theology*, p. 371.

ignorance and denial precipitated by Christianity's theological commitments 'leads us into radical theological territory that necessitates a fundamental break with food consumerism'.[51]

However, unlike Allen, Méndez-Montoya envisions a range of actors playing a part in combatting food insecurity. In his book *The Theology of Food*, Méndez-Montoya says that 'alleviating hunger is not just about giving food to people or making donations', it 'also requires more holistic action that targets structural change.'[52] Méndez-Montoya goes onto affirm the words of Frei Betto, in a special *Concillium* issue on global hunger:

> The aim is to mobilize world resources, under UN supervision, in order to finance entrepreneurial schemes, co-operative movements, and sustainable developments in the poorest regions. Hunger cannot be fought just through donations, or even by transfer of funds. These need to be complemented by effective policies of structural change, such as agrarian and fiscal reforms that are capable of lessening the concentration of income from land and financial dealings.[53]

Allen's emphasis is on the creation of alternative social spaces and forms of production, outside of market and governmental spheres of influence (he quotes from the Anglican theologian Al Barrett: we should '"change the system by ignoring it"').[54] My concern is that Allen has reproduced the 'autonomy of the state' that he rightly refutes by failing to consider government and the possible role of the state within the context of (God's) creation. Méndez-Montoya's position is more internally consistent as it includes the possible re-ordering of state, economy and church in the service of gratitude and fellowship, ecological and sustainable production.[55]

Méndez-Montoya's hope that all may be redeemed in Christ opens a plausible theological space for emancipatory state interventions and regulations or market revolution and reform. They also open out the possibility that calls for 'secular' agencies to institute 'a just social welfare system' and 'living wages' are not 'indistinguishable from the political discourse of capitalism', or that they necessarily emerge from and reinforce 'a capitalist ethic of consumerism' as Allen has claimed.[56] The kind of political theology deployed by Allen – the

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[51] Ibid., p. 371.
[52] Méndez-Montoya, *The Theology of Food*, p. 151.
[53] Frei Betto, quoted in Méndez-Montoya, *The Theology of Food*, p. 151.
[54] Barret quoted in Allen, 'Food Poverty and Christianity', *Political Theology*, p. 375.
[55] Allen's position here is problematic: not only does he homogenise the diverse history of the concept of 'human rights', itself a very diverse set of demands, norms and expectations, he also at the end of his essay affirms kinds of food sovereignty. Ibid., p. 375. On the diversity of the human rights tradition and its various communal or individual presuppositions see Peter de Bolla, *The Architecture of Concepts: The historical formation of human rights* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2013).
[56] Allen, 'Food Poverty and Christianity', *Political Theology*, p. 369. Raising the capacity of the British poor to pay for higher priced food would be beneficial for the world's poor, many of whom work within the agricultural

association of theology with Christian practices, judged with particular reference to the 'preferential option for the poor'– requires further elaboration in continuity with the commitments that can be located in Allen's theological sources. One of Allen's most important theological sources, the Liberation Theologian Gustavo Gutiérrez, for example, bases his calls for liberation on the ubiquity of God's grace and the rejection of any 'pure nature'. Gutiérrez says that 'the temporal-spiritual and profane-sacred antitheses are based on the natural-supernatural distinction' but, as Gutiérrez goes on to say, there is 'no one who is not affected by grace' and 'no pure nature and there never has been' and thus the 'sacred-secular' separation cannot be sustained.[57] While the onus may still lie on the church to be the first to make visible the 'communism of being', Méndez-Montoya and Gutiérrez's theological insights have the depth to incorporate 'social justice' and 'food charity' that challenge and change the food bank volunteer whether they are articulated in explicitly theological terms or not. Do such radical food banking practices exist?

Another Food bank Narrative

Allen argues that both food justice and food aid coincide with neoliberalism and whether this alignment is self-evident and superficial or sequestered away and surreptitious it deserves attention. In continuity with their earlier work, the British 'post-secular' geographers Paul Cloke, Jon May and Andrew Williams take a more nuanced approach to the relationship of 'faith based organisations' and neoliberalism.[58] They do this by first arguing for an internal diversity within the British food bank landscape and, second, for the significance of the loose ends left in the non-coincidental overlap of food banks and the neoliberal. In an article called 'Contested Space: the Contradictory Political Dynamics of Food Banking in the UK' Williams *et al* list and then problematise the critiques which have been levied at British food banks. They

industry and are kept in abject need by suppressed food prices, see Paul McMahon, *Feeding Frenzy: The new politics of food* (London: Profile Books Ltd, 2013).

[57] Gustavo Gutiérrez, *A Theology of Liberation,* trans. Sister Caridad Inda, John Eagleson (New York: Orbis, 1983), p. 69, 70.

[58] Cloke, May and Williams have worked on a number of projects together over the last 8 years in which they have consistently pointed out that the principles of hospitality and generosity embodied by faith based organisations are deeply at odds with the dominant neoliberal paradigm. See Paul Cloke, Jon May, Sarah Johnsen, *Swept Up Lives?: Re-Envisioning the Homeless City* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010). Justin Beaumont, Paul Cloke, eds., *Faith Based Organisations and Exclusion in European Cities* (Bristol: Policy Press, 2012). Paul Cloke, Justin Beaumont, Andrew Williams, *Working Faith, Faith-Based Organizations and Urban Social Justice* (Milton Keynes: Paternoster, 2013). Paul Cloke, Jon May, Andrew Williams, 'The Geographies of food banks in the meantime', *Progress in Human Geography*, Vol. 41, No. 6 (2017), pp. 703 – 726. Williams, Andrew, Cloke, Paul, May, Jon, Goodwin, Mark, 'Contested space: The contradictory political dynamics of foodbanking in the UK*', Environment and Planning A*, Vol. 48, No. 11, pp. 2291 -2316.

'chart the development of food banking as a politicised space of public debate' and set the wider discourse around food banks in the British public and press in dialogue with how the food bank is experienced and contested '"on the ground".'[59] The first narrative about food banks which these authors seek to question is the conclusion that 'food assistance depoliticises problems of food insecurity, by apparently meeting the need for emergency food without confronting the systemic injustices that lead to problems of hunger in developed countries'.[60] The second narrative 'argues that food banking inadvertently serves as a smokescreen for government to shrink responsibility to its citizens, and institutionalises charitable forms of support in place of universal state welfare.'[61] In the third, but building on the second narrative, food banks are accused of playing a role in the 'neoliberal subjectification of "the poor"'.[62] The example they give is the voucher system[63] enshrined in many food banks which can arguably be seen to embed 'a calculation of "genuine need" – thus implicitly betraying a moral judgement of who is considered "deserving" and "undeserving" of food assistance.'[64] Arguably, in this way, food banks materialise and enact the 'dominant discourses of dependency, deservingness and self-responsibility' and there is evidence in the contemporary food banks literature of the 'dark side' of food banks: 'the emotional nexus of shame, stigma, and gratitude... experienced by many food aid recipients' and the 'clear hierarchies of provider and recipient' which food banks uphold.[65] Fourth, food banks have been accused of acting as a '"moral safety valve" which diminishes activism by "assuaging liberal guilt", enabling volunteers and donors to feel better while vital public policy issues go unaddressed.'[66] Should these criticisms be the final word on the British food aid landscape?

Williams *et al*, in contrast to Allen, argue that it should not. They note that the current focus on the UK's largest food bank, the Trussell Trust, underplays 'the diverse and variegated landscape of food aid in contemporary Britain.'[67] Furthermore, in reviewing the politics of food

[59] Williams, *et al*, 'Contested Spaces', *Environment and Planning A,* p. 2292.
[60] Ibid., p. 2293.
[61] Williams, *et al*, 'Contested Spaces', *Environment and Planning A,* p. 2294.
[62] Ibid., p.2294.
[63] In which 'a range of "welfare professionals" are tasked with determining who is eligible for food', those deemed eligible receive a voucher (with a maximum of three in a six month period) which can then be exchanged at the food bank for a three day supply of food. Ibid., p. 2295.
[64] Ibid, p. 2294. In Trussell Trust food banks, vouchers are given to those needing an emergency food parcel by 'welfare professionals' who are adjudicated to have the expertise to decide on who is in need. Voucher distributors include the Citizens Advice, Job Centre Plus, and local and national charity groups. The vouchers can then be redeemed at a food bank for an emergency food parcel.
[65] Ibid p. 2294. The agency of food banks clients is still widely contested, see Pat Caplan, 'Big society or broken society?: Food banks in the UK', *Anthropology Today,* Vol. 32, No. 1, pp. 5 -9.
[66] Williams, *et al*, 'Contested Spaces', *Environment and Planning A,* p. 2294.
[67] Ibid., p. 2295. They list Foodcycle, Food not Bombs, and the pop-up food banks of UK Uncut. Ibid, p. 2295, 2296.

banks they rightly note the 'heterogeneous ways in which the organisational spaces of a food bank – its rules, practices and affective atmosphere – are performatively brought into being through the embodied interactions, and political and ethical proclivities of staff, volunteers and clients.'[68] Williams's ethnographic research is used to point to 'the ways in which dominant discourses of (paternalistic and self-serving) charity, and neoliberal technologies of rationing and subjectification, are reworked in the day-to-day encounters between organisational ethos, technologies and procedures, volunteers and clients.'[69] Along with the recaltrant resistance of the Trussell Trust to the 'reforms' and positioning of the British state (which has become increasingly hostile to the Trust's public contributions) and the important 'space of contestation over the nature and impacts of welfare reform' that have been opened up by this debate, food banks can be places which radicalise and ferment the political outlooks of both clients and volunteers.[70] Williams *et al* conclude the essay by defending the potential of food banks as a politically enlightening space in which unusual encounters prompt personal, spiritual and political growth. They hope that the 40,000 volunteers of the Trussell Trust, along with those of other independent food banks, will be politically radicalised but, as their own research suggests, there is no unilateral correlation between progressive political outlooks and consistent food bank volunteering. Unlike Allen, Williams and his co-writers treat food banks as part of a possible 'system transition': as 'socio-technical niches' in a larger 'dominant socio-technical regime' which may in time reform or overthrow the current, hegemonic order.[71]

Esposito and the formation of Community

Having pointed to problems in Allen's account of the integration of food banking and neoliberal capitalism and his link between professing God as creator of the world and a rejection of the state apparatus it is time to consider Allen's ecclesiology in more detail. Allen argues for a church untainted by capitalism, transparent in the transmission of its transcendent source. He consistently rejects the association of church and state or the 'translation' of theological concepts into secular terminology, prioritising instead the internal consistency of

[68] Ibid, p. 2296.
[69] Williams, *et al*, 'Contested Spaces', *Environment and Planning A,* p. 2296.
[70] Ibid, p. 2297, 2311.
[71] On system transitions see: A. Haxeltine, L. Whitmarsh, N. Bergman, J. Rotmans, M. Schilperoord, J. Köhler, 'A conceptual framework for transition modelling', *International Journal of Innovation and Sustainable Development,* Vol. 3, No. 1–2 (2008), pp. 93–114. F. W. Geels, J. Schot, 'Typology of sociotechnical transition pathways', *Research Policy,* Vol. 36, No. 3 (2007), pp.399–417. Damian Maye, Jessica Duncan, 'Understanding Sustainable Food System Transitions: Practice, Assessment and Governance', *Sociologia Ruralis,* vol. 57, No. 3, pp. 267 – 273.

the church and its conformity to its doctrinal resources.[72] He is not concerned with the church's outside - the secular state and capitalist economy - unless it is for the sake of differentiation. Roberto Esposito, despite his rejection of 'political theology' has something very applicable to offer here, as he has extensively researched the formation of and changes within Western understandings of community, including the Christian church.[73] In short, one of Esposito's central interests is, as Diego Ferrante and Marco Piasentier say, 'three possible ways of understanding the relationship between inside/outside.'[74] This leaves Esposito very well posed to add to our conversation, as Esposito's work opens up the means by which communities define themselves by immunizing themselves from others and he does this with particular sensitivity to how the church undertakes this given task: 'How [can the church] be both natural and elected at the same time? How could it belong to the earth and to heaven? How can it attend to the flesh and the spirit?'[75]

First, Esposito's aim is to articulate a biopolitical order which does not succumb to the twentieth century tendency towards 'thanopolitics': political power over biological life expressed in the rule of the exception or the sovereign's ban from participation and representation in the political community.[76] Esposito has sought in his writings to chart a third way, neither communitarian (or what he refers to as neocommunitarian) accounts of community based on shared adherence to substantive goods nor cosmopolitan individualism which immunizes the person from the stain of social association. Ferrante and Piasentier use Esposito's term immunity to clarify these positions: first there is 'a dynamics of hyper-immunistic' thought typical of resurgent forms of nationalism which is 'activated by [the]

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[72] On 'translation' and public theology see Elaine Graham, *Between a Rock and a Hard Place: Public Theology in a Post-secular Age* (London: SCM Press, 2013).

[73] Although there are sympathetic accounts of the particular community of the church and a careful reading of the socio-political tensions that are present in parts of patristic theology, Esposito's work is primarily concerned with the rejection of transcendence and an explication of the Deleuzian 'plane of immanence'. The claim, central to Esposito's account of Christianity, that Christianity 'tended to widen the gap' between 'the subject and the biological substrate underlying it' requires further investigation. For example, Esposito's claim that Augustine 'assigns a clear primacy to the soul over the body, conceiving of them as substances that are not only dishomogeneous but also opposing' has certainly been challenged by recent Augustinian studies. See Roberto Esposito, *The Machine of Political Theology and the place of thought*, trans. Zakiya Hanafi (New York: Fordham University Press, 2015), p. 60 – 75, 83 – 101, at. 95 . Roberto Esposito, *Third Person,* Trans. Zakiya Hanafi (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2012), p. 7, 75. Peter Langford, *Roberto Esposito, Law, Community and the Political* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2015), p. 120 -127. Kate Cooper, Conrad Leyser, 'The Gender of Grace: Impotence, Servitude, and Manliness in the Fifth-Century West', *Gender & History*, Vol. 12., No. 3 (2000), pp. 536 – 551.

[74] http://thephilosophicalsalon.com/from-outside-a-philosophy-for-europe-an-interview-with-roberto-esposito-part-two, accessed 18/07/2017.

[75] Esposito, *The Machine of Political Theology*, p. 69.

[76] Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*, trans. Daniel Heller-Roazen (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998). Esposito, *Third Person*, p. 64 - 103. Roberto Esposito, 'Community, Immunity, Biopolitics', *Angelaki*, Vol. 18, No. 3 (2013), pp. 83 -90.

raising of barriers and the intensification of identity politics'.[77] The second option is 'a complete absence of immunization', the rejection of any inside/outside 'spurred by the abolition of all borders and the subsequent loss of identity.'[78] But, Esposito rejects both these options, they say, 'because they cause the annihilation of the body politic (in the first case identity is so enclosed that it ends up smothering itself, in the second case it is so open that it ends up dissolving itself).'[79] For them, Esposito's work is concerned with a third way: a path of 'immunization by means of "contamination", which both enriches and strengthens identities.'[80]

In Esposito's work immunity is not the antithesis of community, rather 'immunity is coterminous with community.'[81] The one who is 'immune' and the immune community are those who are 'exonerated or [have] received a *dispensation* from reciprocal gift-giving. He who has been freed from communal obligations or who enjoys an originary autonomy or successive freeing from a previously contracted debt'.[82] Immunity 'presupposes community, but also negates it, so that rather than centred simply on reciprocity, community doubles back upon itself, protecting itself from a presumed excess of communal gift-giving.'[83] Here Esposito is directly relevant to Allen's essay, for the logic of immunity/community is evident in Esposito's understanding of the church: the *koinonia* is the gift of fellowship given to God's people, but also a claim over the whole person who is no longer their own but Christ's.[84] If Allen laid the emphasis on the church grasping itself, Esposito lays his stress on the church being seized by God.

In his book *Communitas: The Origin and Destiny of Community*, Esposito questions 'the ignored assumption that community is a "property" belonging to subjects that join them together: an attribute, a definition, a predicate that qualifies them as belonging to the same totality, or as a "substance" that is produced by their union.'[85] Tracing the Latin term *communitas*, Esposito argues that recent discussions of community as predicated on or the

[77] http://thephilosophicalsalon.com/from-outside-a-philosophy-for-europe-an-interview-with-roberto-esposito-part-two, accessed 18/07/2017.
[78] Ibid.
[79] http://thephilosophicalsalon.com/from-outside-a-philosophy-for-europe-an-interview-with-roberto-esposito-part-two, accessed 18/07/2017.
[80] Ibid.
[81] Timothy Campbell, '*Bios*, Immunity, Life: The Thought of Roberto Esposito', *Diacritics,* Vol. 36, No. 2, pp. 2-22, at. p. 4.
[82] Ibid., p. 4.
[83] Ibid., p. 4.
[84] Roberto Esposito, *Communitas: The origin and destiny of community*, trans., Timothy Campbell (Stanford: Standford University Press, 2010), p. 9-11.
[85] Ibid., p. 2.

production of a surplus are insufficiently nuanced. 'It emerges', Esposito says of this opening genealogical investigation of the term, 'that *communitas* is the totality of persons united not by a "property" but precisely by an obligation or a debt; not by an "addition" but by a "subtraction": by a lack, a limit that is configured as an onus, or even a defective modality for him who is "affected".'[86] Esposito continues: 'the common is not characterised by what is proper but by what is improper, or even more drastic, by the other… community cannot be thought of as a body, as a corporation… neither is community to be interpreted as a mutual, intersubjective "recognition".'[87] This general excavation of the notion of community leads Esposito into a discussion of the particular idiosyncrasies of the community of the church.

Esposito says that the medieval territorialisation of the term *communitas* jettisoned a theological complexity that can be found in the various New Testament usages of the word *koinonia*.[88] Esposito continues: 'the "common place" of the *koinonia* is constituted by the Eucharistic participation in the *Corpus Christi* that the church represents.'[89] For Esposito *koinonia* includes the joined but nevertheless distinct aspects of 'representation' and 'participation', and included in the latter notion 'is the vertical dimension that unites man and God, but also separates them due to the infinite heterogeneity of substance… yes we are brothers, *koinonoi*, but brothers *in Christ*.'[90] This theological overlay of the social is crucial, as it suggests that Christianity is a common 'otherness that withdraws us from our subjectivity, or own subjective property' for only 'God is entitled to subjectivity'.[91] Only God can take the initiative in creating and calling the world and church into being. Only God, Esposito says, can give an unconditional gift as a subject, and it follows that 'what the church offers isn't a true gift', or alternatively: 'that the gift is not completely ours.'[92] Esposito concludes: 'the possibility of the gift is withdrawn from us [the church] in the precise moment when it is given to us; or that it is given to us in the form of its withdrawal... what one participates in isn't the glory of the resurrection but the suffering and the blood of the cross.'[93] In answer to Esposito's earlier question, how can the church be universal and particular, Esposito's answer is that 'to be truly universal [the church] must enter into contradiction with itself.'[94] He goes on: 'the only

[86] Ibid., p. 6.
[87] Esposito, *Communitas*, p. 7.
[88] Ibid., p. 9-11.
[89] Ibid., p. 10.
[90] Ibid., p. 10. Emphasis in original
[91] Ibid., p. 10.
[92] Ibid., p. 11.
[93] Ibid., 11.
[94] Esposito, *Two: The Machine of Political* Theology, p. 69.

way is to be different from itself, identified by a constitutive difference, united by what divides it… authority without community and community without authority.'[95]

Esposito's work problematises appeals to the true character of the church revealed either in particular historical practices or principles. Equally, because this schema takes constitutive lacks as seriously as substantial commons no social group, church or otherwise, can claim the full internal production of its identity. The question rather concerns the subjectivity and activity of God, God's self-disclosure in Christ and the response or lack thereof to this event in the respective fields of the church, the state, and the economy, none of which are fully autonomous or in total possession of themselves. To borrow a phrase from Maurizio Meloni's in an essay on Esposito called 'Biopolitics for Philosophers', the church, state and economy are built around a shared absence; they have 'a concave form.'[96]

Allen may respond to this line of critique by arguing that he was asking not only for an internally consistent church but also for a church that is biased to the poor. However, bias to the poor is also a complicated notion to use in the contemporary British context as recent research suggests that the poor's experience of poverty is itself divided. In an article called 'Poverty talk: how people experiencing poverty deny their poverty and why they blame "the poor"' the sociologists Tracy Shildrick and Robert MacDonald note that paradoxically those caught in 'the low-pay, no-pay' cycle consistently refused to identify themselves as poor.[97] Instead, their interviews with 60 men and women in the British city of Middlesbrough, one of the poorest areas in the United Kingdom, found that the people they interviewed 'constructed a self-identity in contrast to a (usually) nameless mass of 'Others' who were believed, variously, to be work-shy, to claim benefits illegitimately and to be *unable* to "manage" and to engage in blameworthy consumption habits.'[98] Amongst the numerous possible reasons that Shildrick and MacDonald offer for this disassociation the British poor take from the British poor – a broader climate of general antipathy towards the working classes, the defence of individual and family decency, contrasting one's own situation with those of local or international 'poverty', the decline of working class institutions of support and solidarity and with them structural critiques of worklessness and poverty – is the appropriation by the poor of the political narratives and stigma's of social elites.[99] Shildrick and MacDonald argue that

[95] Ibid., p. 69.
[96] Maurizio Meloni, 'Biopolitics for Philosophers', *Economy and Society,* Vol. 34, No. 4 (2010), pp. 551-566, at. p. 553.
[97] Tracy Shildrick, Robert MacDonald, 'Poverty talk: how people experiencing poverty deny their poverty and why they blame "the poor"', *The Sociological Review*, Vol. 61 (2013), pp. 285-303.
[98] Ibid, p. 291.
[99] Ibid., 293 – 300.

the 'ideological discourses about the "undeserving poor" are not simply "top down" rhetoric of the powerful (or the "non-poor") but are shared and enacted by those at the bottom, skewed downwards towards others, objectively, like them.'[100]

These observations neatly cohere with Esposito's account of subjective experience in *Communitas* in which he suggests that experience is not something owned by the subject, or constitutive of the subject, but is that which 'carries the subject outside itself' in the same way as community is 'our not-being-ourselves, our being-other-from-ourselves' and also our 'being-other-from-the-other.'[101] In such a circumstance, can the poor's (non)experience of poverty be considered *a priori* grounds for political renewal or theological retrieval? The experience of shame and powerlessness reported by some food bank users cuts both ways here: it can be seen as a legitimate indictment of food bank practices in line with Gutiérrez's argument that the poor's call for justice is an example of God's praxis in the world (Allen's line of analysis). But it is also important to note that the poor's experience of shame at depending on and accessing food bank charity is a manifestation of the enculturation of the poor into the ideology of the rich. Shame is another means by which the poor live vicariously at the periphery of the existence of the rich.

I have drawn on Esposito's work in this section to problematise Allen's theological use of the preferential option for the poor and retrieval of the church's historical essence. If, as Esposito's work suggests, neither of these key touchstones can be sustained in their current form then the pivot from orthodoxy theology to a church which breaks with all extra ecclesiological institutions also needs to be examined. The idea of extending ecclesiology into the political is very evident in Allen theological interlocutors. Milbank, Méndez-Montoya, and Gutiérrez all transition from a theological commitment to the world being God's to far more wide reaching political and economic reforms than those we find in this essay by Allen. Gutiérrez writes, in *A Theology of Liberation,* that 'only a radical break from the status quo, that is, a profound transformation of the private property system … would allow for the change to a new society, a socialist society.'[102] Milbank also advocates for a kind of socialism, writing that 'socialism is not right because it is "rational" but right because it is just.'[103] Milbank is like Allen in that they both link justice with the life of the church but they are also distinct because Milbank goes on to discuss how the church is 'able to generate sets of distributive priorities

[100] Ibid., p. 300.
[101] Esposito, *Communitas*, p. 122.
[102] Gutiérrez, *A Theology of Liberation,* p. 26.
[103] John Milbank, *The Future of Love* (London: SCM Press, 2009)¸ p. 112.

and to project common goals.'[104] The issue of distribution includes the economy and the state, it includes wide scale land redistribution as Milbank and Pabst say in *The Politics of Virtue* and, I would argue, the state promotion of vegetarian or vegan diets; Allen's radical church is insufficiently radical when compared with these writers, it falls short of the expanse of his theology.[105]

Conclusion

From academics and activists there are widespread calls for a British Food Act, one which can work across the range of governmental departments which currently intersect with issues around food in a coherent and comprehensive manner.[106] Despite the lack of will in the British people and political classes for a radical political alternative, a concerted and collective national response to food issues – local and international – remains the only plausible and proportionate solution to the myriad problems the UK's precarious ecology and precariat poor face. This endeavour is exactly what Allen denies oxygen. His understandable frustration with a bellicose state and a timid church have warped his articulation of the one and curbed his vision for the other. Gutiérrez and Milbank both argue for a cross-contamination of state and church on comparable theological lines to those put forward by Allen. Read with Esposito it is possible to see social reasons for why this is desirable: community and immunity coexist, debt to each other is more fundamental than holding credit.[107]

The limitations of food charity have been well documented, and Allen's essay has been a huge step forward in bringing the conceptual and practical bearings of theology into dialogue with them. However, Allen's position homogenises a diverse set of food aid practices, and fails to hold open their potential as significant organisers and educators on the way to an alternative political future. Second, there is a sharp division between the range of influence and applicability of the theological precepts which Allen uses and those identified by their original theological articulators. Given by God, the state has no right to fabricate a false autonomy, but neither does the church have the right to claim full possession or present to the world full

[104] Ibid., p. 117.
[105] John Milbank, Adrian Pabst, *The Politics of Virtue, Post-liberalism and the Human Future* (London: Rowman and Littlefield, 2016), p. 152 - 156. On Christian vegetarianism see David Grumett, Rachel Muers, *Theology on the Menu: Asceticism, Meat and Christian Diet* (London: Routledge, 2010).
[106] See Dee Butterly, Ian Fitzpatrick, *A People's Food Policy*, available at https://www.peoplesfoodpolicy.org/, accessed, 31/05/2018.
[107] Esposito, *Political Theology*, p. 15.

disclosure of its essential self. It is with both of these held at once that the church should pitch its ecclesiological intervention in the current political order, a pitch both radical and demanding radicalism.

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